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CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

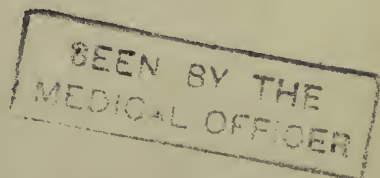
OF THE

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE

for 1948

PRESENTED TO THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25TH JULY, 1949



E. L. RUSSELL,
Chief Education Officer

RECEIVED
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 JUL 1949

MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL SCHOOLS AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE DURING THE YEAR 1947-8

MISS E. M. BARLING, M.B.E. (*Chairman*), *Member of the Birmingham Education Committee.*

MR. B. C. BUCKLEY.

MR. B. BRITTAIN.

MISS J. DAVID (*Member of the Birmingham Education Committee*).

ALDERMAN MRS. A. M. HOWES, M.B.E., J.P., *Chairman of the Health (Mental Health) Sub-Committee.*

MR. E. C. DRACKLEY.

MISS D. M. EDWARDS.

MISS F. A. BARLOW.

MR. G. H. MEEK.

MISS D. E. NEWMAN.

COUNCILLOR MRS. E. V. SMITH, J.P., *Member of Education Committee and Chairman of Special Schools Sub-Committee.*

ALDERMAN MISS F. E. SANT, M.A., J.P., (*Member of the Birmingham Education Committee*).

MR. J. STEVENSON.

MISS L. TURTON.

MISS G. L. VAUGHAN.

AFTER-CARE STAFF

<i>After-Care Officer</i>	MISS A. R. RUSSELL.
<i>After-Care Visitors</i>	MRS. O. LE MAGE.
	MRS. H. K. FINCH.
	MISS S. D. BIBBY, B.A.
	MRS. K. WILLIAMS.
<i>Supervisor, Moseley Road Centre</i>	MISS V. M. ROBINSON.
<i>Supervisor, Kingstanding Centre</i>	MRS. C. E. COE.
† <i>Supervisor, Farm Street Centre</i>	} MISS E. LAMB.
† <i>Supervisor, Weoley Castle Centre</i>	

† Part time

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Special Schools After-Care Sub-Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

1948

The Special Schools After-Care Sub-Committee present their forty-eighth Annual Report. In accordance with the usual practice, the full biennial report having been presented in 1948, this year's report deals exclusively with cases up to eighteen years of age. This is the seventh such report on juveniles.

In contrast to previous years, this report deals not only with juveniles reported during the last two years (*i.e.*, 1947 and 1948), but with all juveniles, irrespective of the year in which they were first reported.

In Part I, statistics are presented, analysing into categories all juveniles reported to the After-Care Committee during the last two years, and those juveniles also, who were reported prior to 1947 and were not yet over 18 years of age by December, 1948.

Part II describes what has been done during the period with regard to:

1. After-care of those who leave school at the age of 16 or thereabouts and who were placed under Voluntary or Statutory supervision.
2. After-care and training facilities for these lower-grade defectives who have been excluded as ineducable before reaching the school-leaving age.

PART I.

ALL JUVENILES DEALT WITH DURING 1947 AND 1948

	a		b		c		d		e		f		g		h		TOTALS	
	Living at home and in paid employment		Living at home and <i>not</i> in paid employment		In hostels, lodgings, &c., and in paid employment		In hostels, lodgings, &c., and <i>not</i> in paid employment		Admitted to Institutions during 1947 & 1948		Placed under guardianship during 1947 & 1948		left District during 1947 & 1948		Deceased during 1947 & 1948			
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
A.—Left school on attaining or approaching 16 yrs. (i) under Voluntary Supervision	90	54	1	3	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	91	61
	110	52	5	5	4	-	1	-	29	9	-	-	1	-	-	1	150	67
	200	106	6	8	4	2	1	-	29	11	-	-	1	-	-	1	241	128
TOTAL VOL. & STAT.																		
B—Excluded from schls. as ined. during 1947 & 1948	5	1	57	28	-	-	3	4	22	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	87	43
C—Excluded from schls. as ined. prior to '47 and still under 18 years of age	58	11	138	114	-	-	1	-	25	23	1	1	6	4	5	3	234	156
TOTAL EXCLUDED CASES	63	12	195	142	-	-	4	4	47	33	1	1	6	4	5	3	321	199
GRAND TOTAL	263	118	201	150	4	2	5	4	76	44	1	1	7	4	5	4	562	327
																	889	

Groups a, b, c and d are still under the After-Care Committee's Supervision, while the other groups are not.

PART I. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF TABLES

A.—THOSE WHO LEFT SCHOOL ON ATTAINING OR APPROACHING 16 YEARS OF AGE, AND WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY PLACED UNDER VOLUNTARY OR STATUTORY SUPERVISION.

(a) Living at home and in remunerative employment:

200 boys
106 girls

—
Total 306
—

(b) Living at home and not in remunerative employment:

6 boys
8 girls

—
Total 14
—

(c) Living in hostels, etc., and in paid employment:

4 boys
2 girls

—
Total 6
—

Boys:

2 boarded out
1 in residential domestic service
1 in lodgings

Girls:

1 in residential domestic service
1 in hospital as ward-maid

(d) Living in hostels, etc., and not employed:

1 boy. This boy is in Cottage Homes.

(e) Admitted to M.D. Institutions:

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
From Residential Special Ed. Sub. Schools	27	8
From home (having attended Ed. Sub. Schls.)	2	3
	—	—
	29	11
	—	—

(f) Placed under Guardianship: None.

(g) Left District:

1 boy, who is now being supervised by another Authority.

(h) Deceased:

1 girl, who died from pulmonary tuberculosis at the age of 17.

The following cases have been placed under supervision after leaving schools other than Ed. Sub. Schools:

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
From Elementary Schools	3	7
From Elementary Schools outside City	—	2
From Private Schools	2	1
From Schools for the Physically Handicapped	5	3
From Open Air Schools	2	2
From Royal Cripples' Hospital	1	—
	<hr/> 13	<hr/> 15
	<hr/>	<hr/>

B and C.—THOSE JUVENILES EXCLUDED AS INEDUCABLE BEFORE ATTAINING OR APPROACHING THE SCHOOL LEAVING AGE.

* (a and b) Living at home: 258 boys and 154 girls:

	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
In remunerative employment	58	12
Useful at home	15	30
Of little use at home	26	17
Helpless	25	14
Attending Occupation Centres	74	44
Having Home Teaching	16	23
Attending private schools or having a private tutor	5	3
Awaiting Institutional vacancies	64	32
Awaiting Occupation Centre vacancies	33	28
Awaiting Industrial Centre vacancies	9	4
Parents have refused to accept any kind of training	10	7

(Note.—As some cases are placed in more than one category, the total of the columns is not the total number living at home.)

* (c and d) In hostels, lodgings, etc.: 4 boys and 4 girls.

Of those living at home or in hostels, etc.:

36 boys and 20 girls attended school of some kind before being excluded.

29 boys and 13 girls were excluded without having attended a school of any kind.

* (e) Admitted to M.D. Institutions during 1947 and 1948:

MALES: 47.

22 of whom were excluded during 1947 and 1948.

25 of whom were excluded prior to 1947.

* Letters refer to the columns of the table on page 4

Of these

- 22 were admitted from home
- 4 were admitted from Monyhull Res. Special School.
- 3 were admitted from Erdington Cottage Homes.
- 6 were admitted from Remand Homes.
- 9 were admitted from Highcroft Hall.
- 1 was admitted from Gt. Barr M.D. Colony.
- 1 was admitted from H.M. Prison.
- 1 was admitted from Sunfield Home, Clent.

—
47
—

FEMALES:

- 10 of whom were excluded during 1947 and 1948.
- 23 of whom were excluded prior to 1947.

Of these

- 15 were admitted from home.
- 6 were admitted from Monyhull Res. Special School.
- 3 were admitted from Cottage Homes.
- 7 were admitted from Highcroft Hall.
- 1 was admitted from Remand Home.
- 1 was admitted from Llansantffraed Court Res. Special School.

—
33
—

* (f) One male and one female have been placed under guardianship during the period and are now supervised by the Mental Health Committee Staff.

* (g) Left District:

- 6 males: 2 to Scotland.
- 2 to Ireland.
- 1 to outside City boundary.
- 1, an evacuee, has returned home.
- 4 females: 3 to outside City boundary.
- 1, an evacuee, has returned home.

* (h) Deceased:

- 5 males aged 15, 14, 13, 13 and 6.
- 3 females aged 16, 5 and 2.

The causes of death include kidney disease, pneumonia, toxic myocarditis, epilepsy and heart failure.

* Letters refer to the columns of the table on page 4

PART II.

1. AFTER-CARE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS.

A high proportion of juveniles who have attained school-leaving age during the period under review have found employment after receiving assistance and vocational guidance from the Youth Employment and Welfare Department of the Education Office. No serious difficulty has yet been encountered in placing these young persons, although fewer opportunities are now open in certain trades. As in previous years, a small number of those dealt with during the period have secured employment as

a result of the co-operation which is maintained between the Special Schools After-Care Department and many employers in the City.

Of the number who are not gainfully employed, all eight girls are usefully occupied at home. The six boys have so far proved unsuitable for employment.

NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT.

The following table shows the variety of occupations in which those juveniles are employed:

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1. Clerical work	—	1
2. Semi-skilled and machine work (including press and electrical work)	55	31
3. Assembling and packing	22	29
4. Labouring	14	—
5. Electrical work other than engineering	3	—
6. Electro-plating and jewellery	—	6
7. Woodwork and cabinet-making	21	—
8. Leatherwork	6	—
9. Boot-repairing	13	—
10. Sewing Trades	—	13
11. Laundrywork	—	5
12. Hotel, café and canteen work	—	6
13. Domestic servants	1	3
14. Shop and distributive trades	11	1
15. Building trades	19	—
16. Gardening and agricultural work	5	—
17. Transport work	10	—
18. Printing	1	3
19. Bakery and food manufacture	6	6
20. Working in cinemas	3	2
21. Painting and decorating	4	—
22. Miscellaneous trades	7	—

WAGES AND EMPLOYMENT

Factory work of various grades continues to attract a large proportion of those leaving school. In specialised trades, building, boot-repairing and woodwork are the occupations most frequently chosen by boys. Among the girls, there is a marked increase in the number of those employed in sewing trades. A decrease is noted in the number of girls engaged in domestic service and in canteens.

The following is a selection of cases representing various wage groups:

MALES:

“A” is one of five boys who earn the lowest recorded wage of 25/- a week. He is employed by a grocer to do errands and to weigh food-stuffs in the shop. The youngest of a large family, he now helps to maintain his widowed mother.

“B” is aged seventeen, and is working for a builder at a wage of 30/- a week. He is of a nervous, retiring disposition, but receives good care and encouragement at home. Two relatives in his mother's family are also under supervision.

"C" is seventeen years of age, and is employed in woodwork at a wage of 41/6 a week. He has a deformed right hand, but uses it with considerable skill. He is a careful worker, cheerful, energetic and a favourite with his work-mates.

"D" was earning the highest recorded wage of £4 15s. at the age of sixteen, while employed on "dogging-up" in a factory. His behaviour at home was unsatisfactory and he grew beyond the control of his widowed mother, refusing to pay her for his board and lodging. Shortly after his seventeenth birthday, he was convicted of breaking-in and stealing a large sum of money, and was sentenced to nine months imprisonment.

FEMALES:

"E" is sixteen years of age, and is working in a lawn-mower factory at a wage of 20/4 a week. This is the lowest wage recorded for a girl. She is a delicate girl, and had much illness during her schooldays.

"F" is seventeen years old, and since leaving school has worked in the canteen of a municipal building at a wage of 32/6 a week. She is delicate and of a retiring disposition, but has adapted herself well to conditions of employment.

"G" is seventeen years of age, and earns 42/- a week as a cinema usherette. She is a capable type of girl, who takes a pride in her personal appearance. She is succeeding well in overcoming the disadvantage of a poor home and of parents who appear indifferent to her progress.

"H" is now aged seventeen, and is working on a handpress at a wage of 63/- a week, which is the highest wage earned by a girl. One of a large family, she comes from a very poor home, but is careful of her appearance, and buys her own clothes.

The following is a selection of the types of cases to which special attention is being given:

MALES:

"I" comes from an excellent home. His parents are respectable people, and extremely sensitive to their son's disability. Their attitude towards Special School was strongly antagonistic, but they now accept after-care visits in a spirit of co-operation. This boy is now attending the reading class organized by the After-Care Department, and is making excellent progress. Since leaving school, he has worked steadily as a lorry-driver's mate for a firm of wholesale grocers.

"J" attended a primary school for some years, but latterly received tuition from a private tutor. He was referred to the After-Care Department by the Child Guidance Clinic, and was placed under Statutory Supervision. His ability was found to be limited by a severe neurosis, which seemed to be the result of expecting too high a standard of attainment from him, both at home and at school. He is an immature, nervous boy, good-natured, but easily led. Following the death of "J's" own mother, his father remarried seven years ago, since when there has been constant friction in the home between "J" and his step-mother, who makes no allowance for his disability. This boy has been working in a factory as an assembler for the past year, and is giving satisfaction to his employer.

FEMALES:

"K" is an adopted child and has an I.Q. of 77. Since leaving school she has been employed by a chiropodist as a receptionist. She is the only juvenile reported during the two-year period who has taken up any kind

of clerical work. Her mother is dead, and her father, who is a grocer, employs a housekeeper. The home is excellent.

"L" belongs to a large family of slovenly type. Prior to leaving school she was boarded-out under a Care and Protection Order, and attended an ordinary primary school outside the City. Shortly after she returned home, her family were evicted from their house, and have since been squatting in derelict premises at various addresses. "L" is a most unstable and unreliable girl, and is completely beyond the control of her parents. She is self-willed, insolent and often shows violence to members of her own family. She has had many jobs, but never stays at any place for more than a few days. Her parents have now consented to her receiving institutional care.

CLUBS AND CONTINUATION CLASSES.

A small number of boys and girls are attached to Youth Clubs. The recently-opened club and reading class at Gem Street Special School for the Educationally Subnormal are fulfilling a long-standing requirement among former pupils of this and other Special Schools for boys. The need of some boys and girls for further instruction in reading is being met by a small class which now meets weekly in the office of the After-Care Department.

DELINQUENCY.

During the period under review, seven of the 369 school-leavers included in this part of the report were brought before the Court. All are boys and six of this number are under Statutory Supervision.

Particulars of the charges and action taken are given below:

<i>Charged with</i>	<i>Action taken</i>
"Q" Stealing	Committed to M.D. Institution.
"R" Breaking in & stealing	Sentenced to 9 months imprisonment.
"S" Stealing a cycle	Placed on 12 months probation.
"T" Breaking, entering and stealing	Committed to M.D. Institution.
"U" Indecent assault	Placed on 12 months probation.
"V" Stealing darts	Bound over for 12 months and fined 40/-.
"W" Stealing tea	Placed on 12 months' probation.

PART II.

2. AFTER CARE OF EXCLUDED JUVENILES.

Although the majority of young persons excluded from school succeed in adapting themselves to conditions of family and social life, many of them, however, prove difficult to place in employment. A few excluded juveniles have shown sufficient interest and concentration to apply themselves to a trade and to retain a settled occupation, but the greater number are working as labourers and odd-job men, and are liable to change their employment frequently. A very small number of boys who are unsuitable for full-time employment are engaged in assisting friendly tradesmen in return for a few shillings a week.

Many of the juveniles in this group are registered under the Disabled Persons' (Employment) Act. If the defective suffers from a physical or intellectual disability which would be obvious to any employer, it is often to his advantage to be placed on the Disablement Register.

The following table shows the variety of employment in this group at present:

EMPLOYMENT—MALES.

LABOURING :

Roadsweeping	.....	.....	.....	1
Building trade	.....	.....	.....	2
Lorry loading	.....	.....	.....	3
Wood labourers	.....	.....	.....	2
Farm labourers	.....	.....	.....	3
General labourers	.....	.....	.....	6

DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES :

Dairymen's rounds	.....	.....	.....	3
Lorry driver's mate	.....	.....	.....	3
Errands	.....	.....	.....	2

MANUFACTURING TRADES :

Metalwork (various)	.....	.....	.....	6
Printing	.....	.....	.....	1
Paper mills	.....	.....	.....	1
Soap making	.....	.....	.....	1
Drilling	.....	.....	.....	2
Spectacle frames	.....	.....	.....	1
Pen factory	.....	.....	.....	1
Cycles	.....	.....	.....	1
General assembling and packing	.....	.....	.....	5
Glassblowing	.....	.....	.....	1

MISCELLANEOUS :

Odd job men	.....	.....	.....	7
Scaffolding worker	.....	.....	.....	1
Plumber's mate	.....	.....	.....	1
Kitchen work	.....	.....	.....	1
Boot repairing	.....	.....	.....	1
Window cleaning	.....	.....	.....	1
Lift operator	.....	.....	.....	1

58

Maximum: £3 10s., Scaffolding

Minimum: £1, Labouring

EMPLOYMENT—FEMALES

Canteen	.....	.....	.....	2
Bakery	.....	.....	.....	2
Wardmaid	.....	.....	.....	1
Presswork	.....	.....	.....	3
Assembling	.....	.....	.....	3
Packing	.....	.....	.....	1

12

Maximum, £3 2s., hand-press

Minimum, £1, bakery

Boys and girls over 16 who are not in gainful employment may be divided into the following groups:

1. Those who are physically helpless and require the constant attention of an adult.
2. Those who are not so helpless or so low-grade as to be unsuitable for training in an Occupation Centre.
3. Those who are higher-grade defectives but too troublesome and difficult for training in an Occupation Centre.

In order to relieve the mother who may be finding the care of the defective an almost intolerable burden, a child in group 3 is sometimes admitted to an occupation Centre, or, whenever possible, is given Home Teaching. But most of the children in this group, like many in group 1, urgently require institutional care and are quite unfit to be kept at home. Until more institutional accommodation is available, responsibility for their care will continue to fall mainly on parents, many of whom are ill-equipped to assume it.

The parents of nearly all these children are already receiving or have applied for National Assistance.

The following are cases of special interest:

"A" is a boy aged 6. He had meningitis at one year. He suffers from epilepsy, having a major fit about once a month, and minor ones very frequently. He has also right spastic monoplegia, and drags the leg affected. His parents are separated, and his mother receives no allowance from the father. The home is supported by the earnings of an 18 year old brother. The child has been awaiting a vacancy in an institution for three years. He sleeps only about two hours per night, is totally incontinent and has no speech but an unintelligible ceaseless chatter. In spite of his infirmity he runs about very fast, and cannot be left alone with safety for one minute. The mother is quite exhausted and consequently the child and the home are in a filthy condition. Every effort is being made to secure an institution vacancy as soon as possible.

"B" is a boy of 11 years with an I.Q. of 53. He was excluded from school very recently. He lodges with his father in a working class district. His father co-habits with the landlady and "B" shares a room with several teen-age girls. After having been excluded from school, "B" was in constant trouble with the Police, who brought him home several times. He was then placed on a year's probation as being in moral danger, and was subsequently admitted to an Occupation Centre ahead of the waiting list, in view of the urgent need of supervision. The Supervisor there states that he is difficult to manage and tends to be a bad influence on the other children. It is hoped that it will not be necessary to exclude him later from the Centre.

"C" is a low-grade girl of 12. She is the only child of parents who are themselves of poor mentality and who are not able to understand or care for a handicapped child. The result is that "C" has been used as a drudge in the house, and on several occasions, when her parents' patience is exhausted, they have ill-treated her. She now attends a full-time Centre, and appears to be benefiting greatly. The parents have been warned that further cruelty will be notified to the N.S.P.C.C., and a watchful eye is being kept on the home.

"D" is a boy aged 13, with an I.Q. of 54. He was excluded from a Special Ed. Sub. School in 1946. He lives with his mother and father, two brothers and a sister, in a rather uncared-for working class house. The father is a labourer and the mother also works. "D" has attended a Centre since December 1947 and is a most helpful and energetic member of the group. While his co-operative spirit is an asset at the Centre, however, it is hardly so in his home neighbourhood, where he is easily led by other boys, including his brother, one year younger but of superior intelligence. Recently he appeared before the Juvenile Court together with other lads from the neighbourhood, charged with setting fire to shop premises. He has been placed on a year's probation, and so far seems to be keeping out of trouble. He now attends the classes at Gem Street, on two evenings a week, and the reading classes at the After-Care Office on a third evening. He makes little progress, but enjoys these evenings immensely and is at least off the streets for a short time.

"E" is a Mongolian girl, aged 14, who is the only child of elderly parents, in a superior home, and who is given every encouragement to improve. Her I.Q. is about 50, and she reads fluently. She attends a whole-time Centre, where she derives much pleasure from reading to and looking after some of the younger children. She is particularly interested in painting, music and ballet dancing, and enjoys making up dances for herself. She is inclined to be fussy, and can be very obstinate at times. Her parents are devoted to her and tend to spoil her.

"F" is aged 13, and is the third child of parents who are now separated. The other two children are much older and at work. "F" has never attended school and his mother will not hear of his attending an Occupation Centre or of having home teaching. He has an I.Q. of about 45-50, is amenable and sociable, and appears very suitable for training. He is used to run errands at home by his mother, who is a poor, unhealthy type of woman. The house is neglected and almost bereft of furniture. Continual visits have been made to try to persuade the mother to allow "F" to have some kind of training, but up to date she has only consented "to think it over."

"G" is a little boy of 8, with an I.Q. of 37. He has an older brother, who is said to be very intelligent. The parents are unmarried, of a very low-grade type; the mother is middle-aged and the father elderly. He cannot read. The home conditions are appalling and the child would be better in an institution, but the mother refuses to give her consent. Until recently, the child spent all his time with a neighbouring farmer, who frequently clothed and fed him. "G" now attends a full-time Centre and appears to be very happy there. Both he and his mother have been noticeably cleaner and better clothed recently.

"H" is 17 years of age, has an I.Q. of 55, and was excluded from an Ed. Sub. School at the age of 14½. He lives in a working-class home, with two younger step-brothers and a step-mother. His father is in the Army. The home is poor and untidy and very little care or encouragement is given by the stepmother. "H" has worked since leaving school and is now earning £3 10s. at a scaffolding company—the highest wage earned by any excluded juvenile. He gives 30/- to his step-mother and spends the rest on the cinemas. He states that he goes every night and twice on Saturdays and Sundays. He is being encouraged to join a nearby club,

but he is a solitary type and prefers to be by himself. He is most good-natured to his two young step-brothers.

"I" is a little girl, aged 9. She is an epileptic and lives in an excellent home with devoted parents and an adult sister. She is very unsteady on her feet and has practically no speech. Three years ago she showed little or no response to tests, was bad-tempered, babyish and very restless, but it was decided to give her a trial at a Centre in spite of these defects. Since then, she has improved more than any other child in her Centre, and was still making excellent progress when she had two severe fits and had to be temporarily excluded. The parents, who were very much upset, consulted their doctor, and after three months, during which she has had no further fits, "I" has now been allowed to return to the Centre. The parents are delighted and "I" also seems very happy to be back.

DELINQUENCY AMONG EXCLUDED JUVENILES

(b and c of Table on page 4)

During the period under review, out of a total of 520 excluded juveniles, ten (one of whom is a female) were brought before the Juvenile Court.

Particulars are given below:

Age at date

<i>of charge</i>	<i>Charged with</i>	<i>Action taken</i>
16½	Stealing (second charge)	Committed to M.D. Instn.
15	Indecent assault (second charge)	Committed to M.D. Instn.
11	Entering a boathouse & releasing a boat	Committed to M.D. Instn.
15	Stealing	Committed to M.D. Instn.
12	1. Stealing from bombed property	6 months probation.
13	2. Warehouse breaking	Committed to M.D. Instn.
16	Breaking, entering & stealing.....	Discharged after evidence as to Mental Age.
16	Stealing money (second charge)	Committed to M.D. Instn.
11½	Shopbreaking	Committed to M.D. Instn.
13	Beyond parental control	Committed to M.D. Instn.
14	Setting fire to shop premises	12 months probation.

OCCUPATION CENTRES

The Settlement, Kingstanding, Monday to Friday, 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Friends' Institute, Moseley Road, Monday to Friday, 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Community Centre, Weoley Castle, Monday to Friday, 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Friends' Hall, Farm Street, Monday to Friday, 2 to 4 p.m.

125 children are attending the four Centres. Of these, 51 are girls, and 74, boys. Although all Centres are filled to capacity, there are still over 60 children on the waiting list. Many have to cover long distances to the Centres, after changing buses on the way. Among these are some attending Kingstanding from the Alum Rock and Glebe Farm districts, and a little girl attending Weoley Castle from Acock's Green. In spite of this, the attendance at all the Centres is good, the average at the whole-

time ones being about 26, and at the afternoon one, about 20. The number of guides has had to be increased in all the Centres and there are now three at each.

Since the last report, the Weoley Castle Centre has been opened full-time. Miss Lamb, previously at Farm Street, has now become Supervisor at Weoley Castle. There is also an assistant and a full-time attendant. This Centre is the first to have school meals supplied from outside. The service is proving most satisfactory and the children have an adequate and attractive meal each day as in the other Centres, where the meals are still cooked on the premises. The cost in either case is 5d. per head. A few children benefit from the reduced rate of 3d. All four Centres benefit also from the Free Milk Scheme.

Much excellent work continues to be done, and training given through musical and physical activities, handicrafts and domestic work. Speech training, habit-training and hygiene also form an important, though more incidental, part of the curriculum.

The usual open days have been held during the year, and many visitors were welcomed to the handwork exhibitions and Christmas Parties. This year, the children having Home Teaching were invited to the party at the Centre nearest their home. Our thanks are due to the many kind friends who made it possible for these parties to take place by their generous gifts of money, food and toys.

After careful consideration, it was decided, with regret, to exclude boys over the age of 18 from the Centres at Christmas, so that more of the younger children who had never had the advantage of Occupation Centre training could be admitted. (A few girls over 18 still attend all the Centres, thus the number of juveniles attending Centres, given earlier in this report, does not tally with the total numbers attending, as given above.) This step mainly affected the Kingstanding Centre when the parents of six older boys attending were asked to withdraw their boys. Although this meant hardship for some of the parents and disappointment for the boys concerned, it has been felt since that the step was justified. As a temporary measure, until such time as the Industrial Centre can be opened, a Wednesday afternoon class has been arranged at the Kingstanding Centre for any unemployed boys over 16 who care to attend. Although this means only two hours occupation per week, the boys feel they are not forgotten and enjoy meeting each other. At present, they are proving most useful in repainting and mending some of the Centre apparatus. The other Occupation Centre children are sent home after lunch on the afternoon these older boys meet, as the staff and premises are insufficient for both groups to attend at once.

During December 1948, the storage hut at Kingstanding was burned out one Saturday night. Practically all the equipment was lost and much handwork prepared by the children for Christmas presents. Most articles have now been replaced, including the green cotton gym frocks for the girls. These were made on the premises by the staff and older girls. Overalls and plimsols have now been supplied to the three whole-time Centres.

HOME TEACHING

During the past year, the number of children has varied between 40 and 60. In spite of the increase, the lessons have not been less frequent than once a fortnight, and in some cases it has been possible to provide

a weekly lesson by grouping children together. This has proved a most satisfactory plan and teachers and parents are to be congratulated on their co-operation. In the case of children on the Occupation Centre waiting list, mixing with a small group in the home before entering the much larger Centre group, has certainly helped some children to adjust themselves more easily when later admitted to a Centre.

With Miss Lamb's appointment to a full-time Centre, only two part-time teachers remain, and it is to be hoped that further Centre accommodation will soon be available, so that the number of home-taught mentally defective children can be reduced.

It was most satisfying to observe the amount of handwork shown by this group at the Farm Street Exhibition.

FUTURE PLANS

There is an urgent need to open more Centres as soon as possible to absorb the 60 children on the waiting list. It is hoped to open the Farm Street Centre full-time in September, 1949, and about the same time a new one in Aston. This new Centre will cater not only for 30 children up to 16 years, but will fill a very long felt want by providing additional and separate accommodation for a small Industrial Class to occupy about a dozen boys.

There is a further need for a Centre in the Alum Rock or Glebe Farm districts, from which many children attend other Centres, but it has so far proved impossible to find suitable premises in either of these areas.

There would appear to be a permanent need of Occupation Centre accommodation for approximately 200 children in the City, and as a long-term policy, the building of premises suitable for the purpose is being considered.

APPENDIX.—SPECIAL SCHOOLS AFTER-CARE SUB-COMMITTEE. VISITATION OF CASES, 1st DECEMBER 1947 TO 20th NOVEMBER 1948.

	VISITS		CASES		TOTALS	
	STAT.	VOL.	STAT.	VOL.	VISITS	CASES
Mrs. Le Mage	447	317	348	170	764	518
Mrs. Finch	1032	332	893	246	1364	1139
Miss Bibby	1257	476	1095	414	1733	1509
Miss Boucher (Dec.—March only)	207	102	176	90	309	266
Mrs. Williams (April—Nov.)	555	237	529	206	792	735
Miss Russell (Sept.—Nov.)	84	35	76	23	119	99
Voluntary Visitors	28	10	25	9	38	34
Students	32	20	32	20	52	52
TOTALS	3642	1529	3174	1178	5171	4352